



**THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE
& THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-TREASURER**

March 26, 2020

Dear Band Members,

Yesterday, Wednesday, March 25, Governor Walz issued Executive Order 20-20, ordering Minnesotans to stay at home for two weeks as part of the State's effort to limit the spread of the coronavirus, or COVID-19. After long discussions with tribal leaders and out of respect for tribal sovereignty, this order exempted Indian Tribal governments. As tribal governments, the 11 tribes in Minnesota each have an inherent sovereign right to determine for ourselves what the best course is for our communities.

We have been in daily communication with the Governor's office, and were made aware in advance that the Governor would be issuing an Executive Order. As Chief Executive and Speaker/Secretary-Treasurer, we discussed and planned for a Mille Lacs Band (MLB) Executive Order that would apply to our Band. We agreed that it is critically important that we use every tool available to us to protect our Band community from the spread of COVID-19, especially among our elders and those with underlying health conditions who may have a harder time fighting this disease.

Shortly before the Governor issued Executive Order 20-20, the Band Assembly passed emergency legislation amending Title 27, Section 1 of Band Statutes, authorizing the Chief Executive to "(f) control the movement of persons subject to the jurisdiction of the Band on all lands under the territorial jurisdiction of the Band" only when the Band is in a State of Emergency.

Immediately following passage of this amendment, Chief Executive Benjamin signed MLB Executive Order 2020-05. Similar to MN Executive Order 20-20, the MLB Executive Order requires enrolled Mille Lacs Band Members living on the reservation or Band trust lands as well as enrolled members of other federally recognized tribes who live within our jurisdiction to remain at their home or place of residence as much as possible beginning at 11:59 p.m. on Friday, March 27th, which is when Governor Walz's Executive Order goes into effect. It is our

intention to lift this Executive Order when Governor Walz lifts the Executive Order for the State of Minnesota.

Several exceptions are made in the MLB Executive Order. There are certain essential activities that are permitted, including travel for the purpose of obtaining supplies, services and food for households, engaging in activities essential for the health and safety of families, such as obtaining medical supplies or assistance, transporting or caring for a family member, friend or pet in another residence, and engaging in outdoor activities while practicing social distancing. This MLB order does not apply to ceremonial activities or activities while exercising hunting, fishing and gathering rights in the ceded territories, although social distancing is advised as much as is possible. A list of those categories is included in the MLB Executive Order.

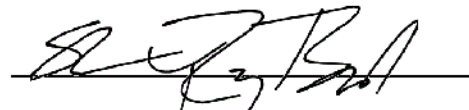
This order means the Band will likely further reduce our workforce during this two-week period. Certain employees who are essential for critical service-delivery will be identified and issued a letter from the Band government which exempts them from this order during work hours, and allows them to conduct their work activities throughout all three Band districts. However, we want to be very respectful of the concerns of our employees and their unique family circumstances. Commissioners will make every effort to address specific employee concerns.

These are very trying times, when difficult decisions must be made. We hope the community understands the need for these new but temporary restrictions. If we stand together during this time in unity, and Band Members comply with this MLB Executive Order, lives may be saved.

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Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin



Secretary-Treasurer Sheldon Boyd